

SOME ACCOUNT

OF THE

Society

FOR THE

CONVERSION AND RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION
AND EDUCATION

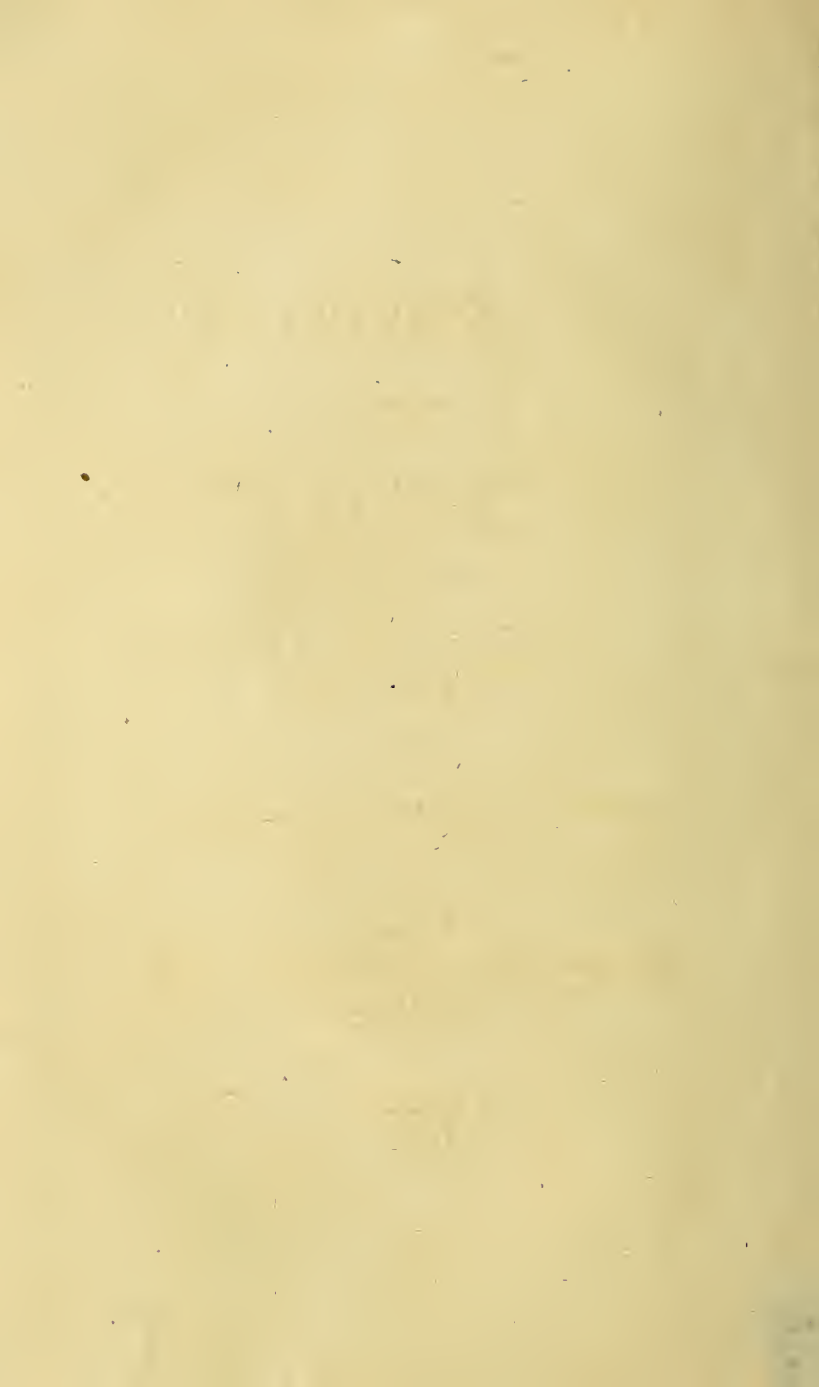
OF THE

NEGROE SLAVES

IN THE

BRITISH WEST INDIA ISLANDS.

1823.



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Incorporated by Royal Charter, 1794.

LONDON:

PRINTED BY R. GILBERT,

ST. JOHN'S-SQUARE.

1823.

res. 7586.64 no. 11

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SOME ACCOUNT,

&c.

THE foundation of this Society was laid by the Right Reverend Beilby Porteus, late Lord Bishop of London, in the year 1794, upon the charitable bequest of the Honourable Robert Boyle.

By his will, dated the 18th July, 1691, Mr. Boyle directed the residue of his personal estate to be laid out by his executors “for charitable and other pious and good uses, at their discretion,” but recommended them to appropriate the greater part thereof to “the Advancement or Propagation of the Christian Religion amongst Infidels.”

The Executors accordingly purchased an estate at Brafferton, in the county of York,

and vested it in the hands of Trustees, to the intent that the rents and profits thereof should be applied to “the Advancement of the Christian Religion amongst Infidels in Virginia*,” in such manner as the Earl of Burlington, and the Bishop of London, for the time being, should appoint.

These proceedings took place under the orders and sanction of the Court of Chancery; and the clear rents of the estate were remitted to the College of William and Mary in Virginia, and applied to the education and instruction of such Indian children as were received therein, until the breaking out of the war between this country and America.

After the conclusion of that war, the Bishop of London caused an information to be filed in Chancery, in order to obtain an application of the rents and profits of the estate to the benefit of subjects of the crown

* The estate is subject to a rent-charge in perpetuity of 90*l.* per annum, to a Society for Propagating the Gospel in New England, and parts adjacent, in America, to the Receiver's salary, and other incidental charges.

of Great Britain *: and it was the decision of the Court that his Lordship should lay a scheme before the Master, for the disposition of the produce of the said estate and charitable fund, according to the intention of Mr. Boyle.

Such a scheme having been accordingly drawn up and approved, the Bishop proceeded, agreeably to the suggestion of the Court, to apply to his Majesty for letters patent, for the creation of a Corporation to direct the Charity; when his Majesty, being graciously pleased to encourage so laudable and charitable an undertaking, acceded to the petition, and erected and established by his Royal Charter “THE CORPORATION FOR THE CONVERSION AND RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION, AND EDUCATION OF THE NEGROE SLAVES IN THE BRITISH WEST INDIA ISLANDS.”

The Society, thus established, held its first Meeting on the third day of April, 1794;

* The Bishop found an able assistant in this cause in the late Richard Burn, Esq. Treasurer to the Charity.

when, having elected a President, Vice-Presidents, and other officers, all the Members who were present signified their intention to subscribe * an annual sum towards the support of this pious and benevolent Institution; and it was ordered, that those who might be desirous to promote its interests, either by Donation, or Legacies, or Annual Contributions, should be requested to signify their intentions to the Treasurer, from whom they might learn further particulars respecting the general object of the Society.

The Governors of the several Islands having been first consulted by a circular letter written by the Bishop, two Gentlemen in Holy Orders were, respectively, sent out to the Islands of Jamaica and Barbadoes; one of whom did not long survive the period of his appointment.

* Subscriptions were received in aid of the Society until the year 1803, when the General Board, taking into consideration the ample state of its revenue, and the difficulties which it then felt of providing proper Agents for its purposes, was of opinion that it would be expedient to suspend, *for a time*, the collection of voluntary contributions.

Assistance was next afforded to the Island of St. Kitt's, to which a Clergyman was commissioned in 1795.

In the course of the year 1798, the Reverend Mr. Curtin was stationed at Antigua, where he has persevered in the faithful and effective discharge of his duties until the present day.

In the autumn of the year 1805, a Clergyman was procured for the Island of Nevis, where he continued to reside about two years.

A Schoolmaster was next appointed as an assistant to Mr. Curtin, with whom he still remains : and about the same time, (viz. in the year 1810), a Gentleman in Priest's Orders was engaged by the Society to administer assistance to the Negroes of St. Vincent. His services, however, were but of short duration, as he died upon this Island within a few months.

The small number of appointments here enumerated, will shew what difficulties

were opposed, during the continuance of the late war, to the benevolent exertions of the Society, and to the frequent efforts which were made, by advertisements and also by private applications, to procure assistants duly qualified for its important work.

Unable to obtain Agents exclusively its own, the Society, about this time, was induced to look for assistance to Clergymen who were already resident upon the Islands : and, being satisfied as to the points of leisure and ability, accepted the partial services of three very respectable Ministers, who expressed their readiness to extend their pastoral care to the Negroes and their children.

At the conclusion, however, of the war, the Society was enabled to fill up the vacancies which had occurred among its Ministers and Schoolmasters : and, from that time to the present, all the strength which its funds have placed at its command, has been steadily put forth, and faithfully applied in carrying into effect the object of the Charter.

Though a good Stewardship has more than doubled the revenues of the Charity since it was placed in the hands of the Corporation, yet they are very far from being adequate to the demands upon them. Repeatedly has the Society had applications for assistance which it has the mortification of finding itself unable to grant; and it should seem, by the increase of such calls of late, that the time is near at hand, in which the field assigned for its exertions will, for the most part, become accessible in every British Island.

The letters of the Gentlemen who are in the service of the Society,* as well as those

* The following is a list of those Gentlemen who are at present acting under the direction of the Society in the British West India Islands.

The Rev. J. Curtin,	}	Antigua.
The Rev. B. Luckock,		
Mr. Croot, Schoolmaster,		
The Rev. J. M'Intyre,	}	Jamaica.
The Rev. J. Stainsby,		
The Rev. G. Young,		
The Rev. J. Jefferson,		
The Rev. D. G. Davis,		Nevis.
The Rev. J. B. Pemberton,		St. Kitt's.

of many intelligent persons, who feel an interest in its concerns, bear testimony to the awakening spirit which is manifesting itself around them in favour of the communication of Christianity to the Negroes; and to the growing disposition to encourage their conversion to that Holy Religion, by which their condition must be ameliorated here, and the prospect will be opened to them of an admission into endless happiness hereafter.

Neither is the attention which is now directed to the spiritual welfare of the Negroes, confined to private individuals. The same warmth of feeling has been as honourably manifested in many instances, in those who have been invested with the highest powers in the Islands, as well as in the public proceedings of many of the Colonial Assemblies: so that now there is no reason to apprehend that the views of the Society will fail, through want of proper encouragement on the spot, to the Clergy engaged in its service.

It is not without full confidence in the result of such a measure, that the Governors of the Society thus lay before the public the following statement of the particulars of the fund which found so faithful and able a protector in Bishop Porteus, and which was entrusted by the Charter of his late Majesty to their management.

	£.	s.	d.
The gross Rental of the Estate.....	851	17	8
The Rent-charge to the Society for Propagating the Gospel in New England	90	0	0
	<hr/>		
	761	17	8
About 46,000 <i>l.</i> 3 per cent. Consolidated Bank Annuities.....	1380	0	0
	<hr/>		
	2141	17	8
	<hr/>		

The Governors think proper to add, that reports will from time to time be made respecting the success of the Society's labours, the state of its funds, and the application of its revenues, for the information of the Subscribers and the Public.

Donations and Annual Subscriptions will be received by the following Bankers.

Messrs. Smith, Payne and Smith, *Mansion House-Street.*

Messrs. Barnard, Dimsdale and Dimsdale, *Cornhill.*

Messrs Sikes, Snaith, and Co. *Mansion House-Street.*

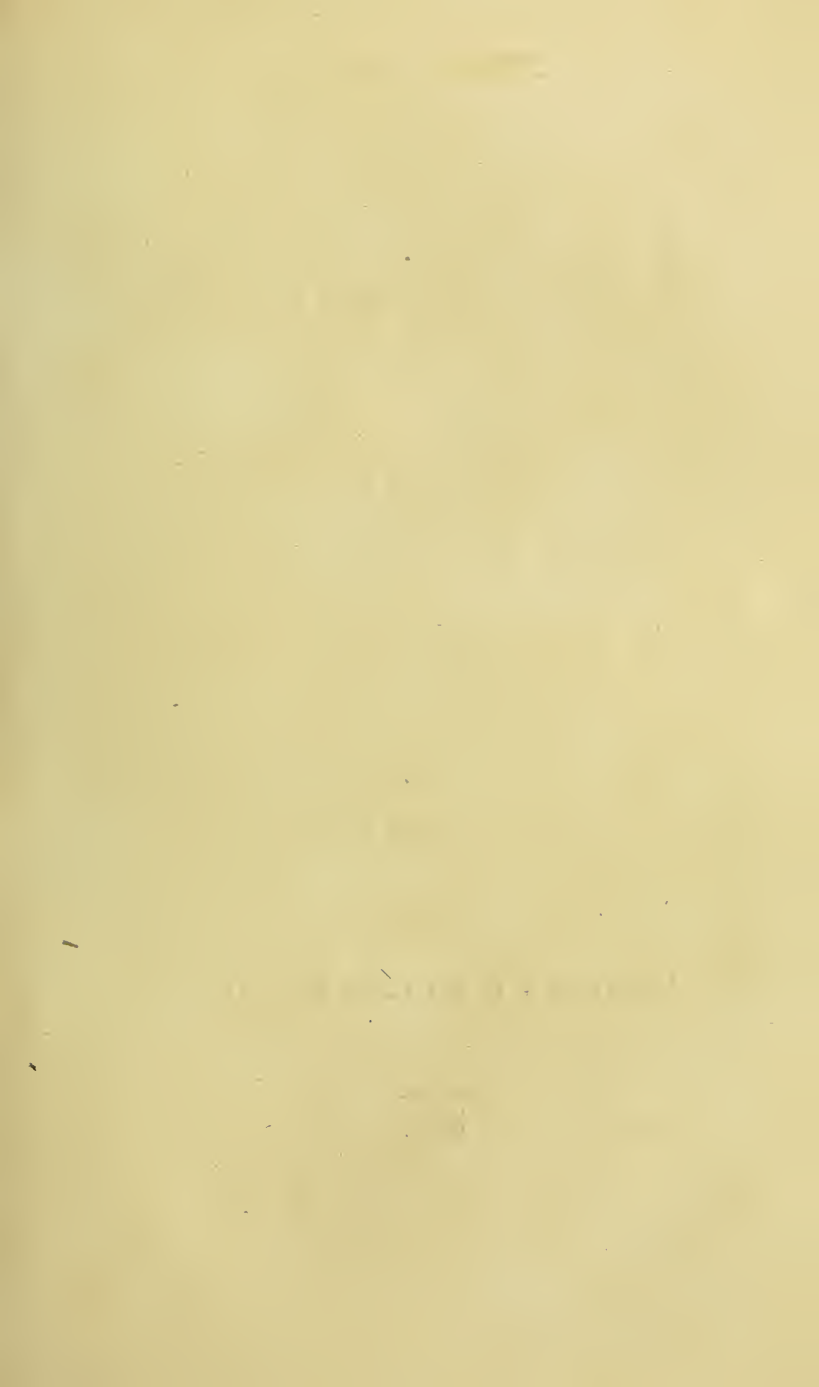
Messrs. Hoare, *Fleet-Street.*

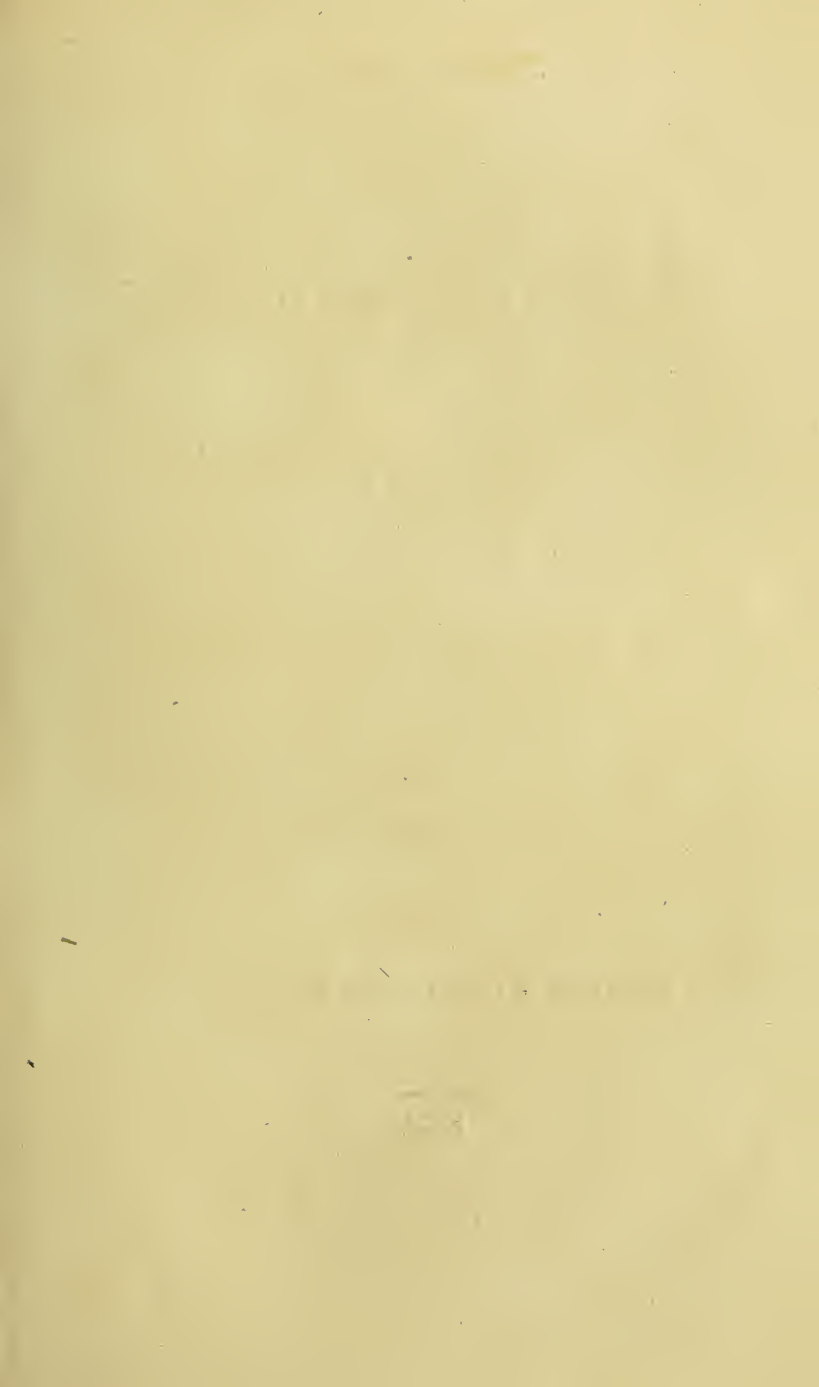
Messrs. Cocks, Cocks, Ridge and Biddulph, *Charing-Cross.*

Messrs. Hammersley, *Pall-Mall.*

By the Treasurer, T. Porteus, Esq. 34, *Half Moon-Street, Piccadilly*; and by the Secretary, 14, *Duke-Street, Westminster.*

Subscriptions now paid will be considered as given for the Year ending at Christmas 1824.





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